

B'nai Butte Buzz

*East River Valley Jewish Community
March, Adar 5778*



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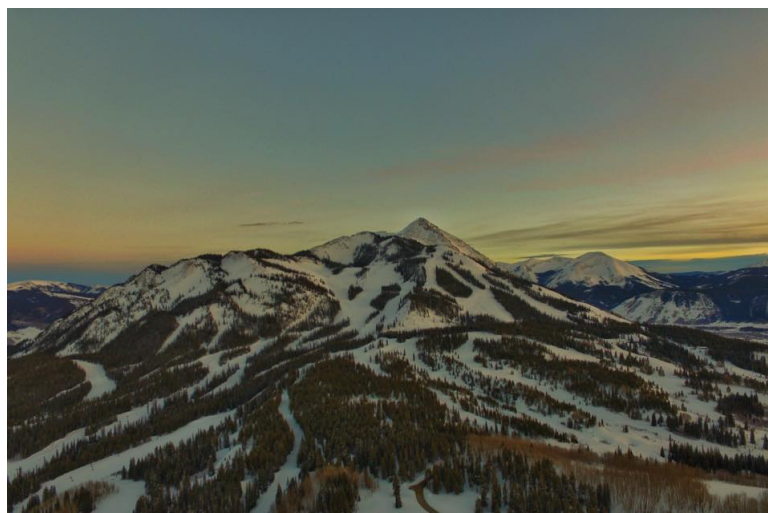


Photo: Allen Smith

Upcoming Events:

March 9

**Tea Time with Rabbi Robbi
at the T-Bar**

March 9

**Shabbat Across America/
Purim Pot Luck
Celebration**

March 10

**Coffee with Rabbi Robbi at
Coffe Lab**

March 11

**Coffee with Rabbi Robbi at
Coffee Lab**

June 21-24

**Shabbat in CB & Leadville
Cemetery Clean Up**

July 19-22

**Rabbi Robbi's last visit as
our Rabbi**

March Madness

Friday, March 9

10AM - 1PM Tea time with Rabbi-Cantor Robbi at the T-Bar on Elk Avenue. Come hang out to enjoy some delicious tea and great company.

Friday, March 9

6PM Join B'nai Butte for a Big Shabbat/Purim potluck dinner celebration at Queen Of All Saints Parish Hall, 401 Sopris Ave. B'nai Butte is participating in Shabbat Cross America and Canada for the first time. We want to welcome anyone who would like to experience Shabbat in Crested Butte. So tell all your friends in Crested Butte. For our locals, please bring a sizable dish and drinks to share with our community and guests who might be joining us. Please call Ofra, 970-349-5211 with any questions. If you want to learn more about Shabbat Across America and Canada (SAA) check out their website here: <http://njop.org/programs/shabbat/shabbat-across-america-canada/>.

Saturday, March 10

10AM - 1PM Take a break from skiing and riding and grab a hot drink with Rabbi Robbi at the Coffee Lab in Mountaineer Square on the mountain.

Sunday, March 11

10AM - 1PM Take a break from skiing and riding and grab a hot drink with Rabbi Robbi at the Coffee Lab in Mountaineer Square on the mountain.

No Community Passover Seder This Year

We will not be having a community Passover seder this year. If you are interested in joining a family for the seder please contact Ofra at 970-349-5211 and we will try to accommodate you.

SAVE THE DATES

Mark your Calendars for June 23- June 24:

Leadville Historic Hebrew Cemetery Clean-up Shabbaton.

This will include a shabbat morning service and luncheon on June 23, Havdalah/dinner in Leadville Saturday evening with Robbi and members of our congregation, and the clean-up Sunday morning June 24. Contact Leslie with any questions at lbme01@yahoo.com. The arrangements for staying in Leadville are up to the individuals who are planning to go.

A Few Words From Rabbi Robbi

Making Pesach Memories: (Crazy) Family Traditions

In Texas, if you want to dis(respect) somebody without actually dissing them, you would name their fault and quickly add: "Bless their little heart." As in: "She can't help it – that dye she used made her hair color look like a feral hog in summer - Bless her little heart!" (Actually overheard once...)

Believe it or not, that leads to my Dad's mother, my Nana Vera, of blessed memory - and to Jewish food. The Sherwins were Kosher caterers in Cleveland. Nana would send us baked goods ("care packages" Mom called them) several times a year. I thought C.A.R.E packages were for starving children in Biafra, but the goodies from the Sherwin Bakery were delicious, so who was I to argue? Besides, we rarely got to Cleveland as we were a struggling Air Force family that moved very frequently. These goodies were a lifeline.

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No matter where we lived, Nana Vera and Papa Louis came to us for Passover. The year my Dad was in Viet Nam, we were living in Sherman, Texas on the border near Oklahoma. Mom was a nervous wreck anticipating “Nana V.” coming, especially without Dad there. Nana was a tough act to follow and a mean critic - Mom always needed a least a week to recover after a visit from her.

Nana V. did not have much of a filter. She spoke without thinking and was often offensive - and completely clueless about it, bless her little heart. One year, I was making the *charoses* (the chopped nut/fruit mixture representing the mortar used by the Israelite slaves in Egypt), and Nana V. came over to snoop on me. She always compared everything anyone did to her rabbi, the esteemed Reb Levy or his wife, Rebbetzin Levy.

“What are you putting in there?” she shrieked as I added pistachios, figs, dates, ginger and a bit of - horrors! - nutmeg - to the charoses. EVERYONE knows that you CAN NOT CHANGE the charoses! Reb Levy told me that! Were you raised in a barn?” (I saw Mom wince.) “What a SHONDA! * I let it go, as we did so many of her utterances – many of which were actually Archie Bunker-like malapropisms and not fit for this article. Bless her little heart.

Nana V. was in charge of the all-important matzo ball soup and would insist on getting everyone’s opinion of her *kneidlach*. (Yiddish for dumplings.) After they gracefully floated to the top of the consommé, she ran all over the house, up and down the stairs and into the back yard blowing on a spoon with a piece of her prized matzo ball on it. She repeated this steeplechase-like run until every member of the household had tasted her matzo balls. Of course, Rebbetzin Levy had personally given Nana V. her secret: seltzer water.

One year, their plane was late and I started making the matzo balls. Nana V. ran in the house and gave my Dad those loud, smoochy kisses she was known for, and confronted me: “Who taught you to make matzo balls like THAT?” They weren’t even in the soup pot yet. She shooed me away - threw them out - and proceeded to make them herself. Nana V. was not subtle, bless her little heart.

We developed a Sherwin family Passover tradition – started by my Uncle Jerry (who denies it!) known as the “Casting of the Olives.” Nana V. wore her perfectly coiffed silver hair in a bouffant and it was the perfect landing/nesting place for the green or black olives that my mom always had on our Pesach table, along with sweet gherkin pickles and other vegetables to stave off our hunger during the Seder. The “Casting of the Olives,” which my siblings and I feel should be an Olympic event, evolved from a toss or two here and there to a full-scale olive war. Accuracy and secrecy were everything: The rule was you couldn’t be seen casting the olives at each other, and more than once, Nana and others were often mysteriously splashed when one landed in a wine glass or in the bowl of salt water. Over the years it definitely got out of hand, and Nana protested loudly. Every year before Passover she would say: “You are NOT going to throw olives, are you? That is SO disrespectful! AND unsanitary!”

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We did it anyway.

When she was in her mid-nineties, Nana V. was telling me how her mahj jongg friends were comparing crazy holiday family traditions. One family went up on their roof after their 4 glasses of Manischewitz wine and howled at the moon. Another always hid the *afikomen* (matzo to be used for “dessert”) in the same place. They actually held individually timed races to see who could reach it first. “That’s NOTHING!” Nana V. exclaimed loudly (She had an amazing gift of “one-upping,” bless her little heart), “Let me tell YOU about the Casting of the Olives. And you should see the arm and accuracy on MY GREAT-GRANDSON THE SOCCER PLAYER!”

I stifled my laughter, but then I realized that she loved us with all of our Seder quirkiness, and was even proud of the crazy tradition we have come up with.

Passover is the most observed holiday of all the Jewish holidays – more than Shabbat or even Chanukah and it is supposed to be joyful, fun and celebratory. Even those who consider themselves Jew-“ISH” will make the effort to make or attend a seder. Jews from all over the world will sit around their tables, sing their songs, eat their traditional foods and tell the story of our redemption from slavery. Jewish families from all over the world will have their own traditions: they will cast their own olives.

What are your Pesach family traditions? How will you relay their origins, how will you pass them down to your children and grandchildren? What new traditions will you come up with to bond your family to the past and future? I’d love to hear them: please write me: rabbirobbi@gmail.com

For Pesach 5778, in this year of 2017, I hope we will enjoy sitting around the seder table sharing our words, our songs, our foods and our craziness. Through this freedom to be ourselves, may we find deep meaning, deep laughter and deep personal redemption.

Wishing everyone a zissen (sweet) Pesach,
Rabbi Robbi

Thank you!

I have received dozens of emails and calls from you, my CB family, after the announcement of my retirement from B’nai Butte and my move to the Wood River Jewish Community in Ketchum/Sun Valley, Idaho. It is hard to express in words what your love and support has meant to me, but I hope to do so in person when we see each other again in March, June & July. Please check this newsletter for my scheduled times for coffee/tea, and feel free to contact me for other times that work for you, as well. I feel so unbelievably blessed to have you in my life – thank you.

Robbi

Hosts Needed!

We need volunteers to host our shabbat dinner in June and host Rabbi Robbi and possibly Mark for her June visit. We will also need someone to host Rabbi Robbi for her last visit as our Rabbi in July. We need your help. Please call Ofra at 970-349-5211 or email bnaiutte@gmail.com to volunteer or further information.

Thank-you!

BBYO CALLOUT

BBYO is working on invigorating the Crested Butte Chapter. If you know anyone interested please contact Rena Elfenbein at Elfenrena123@yahoo.com or Ben Wright at Benjamin.wright@western.edu.

Contributions

B'nai Butte gratefully acknowledges the following generous contributions. Won't you please join them?

Anonymous

Becky and Joe Williams

Gil and Lynn Friedlander Family Philanthropic Fund of the Dallas Jewish Community Foundation

Howard Shaw

The website has been updated and you can now donate straight on the website. <http://www.bnaiutte.org/>.